Is God Is

A play by Aleshea Harris

Aleshea Harris
(727) 510-6325
aharris@bagofbeans.net

Characters

RACINE African-American. A woman of twenty-one years. Identical twin sister to ANAIA. Has burn scars on her arms, back and neck but a face of considerable beauty.

ANAIA Has burn scars on her arms, face and neck. Hard to look at. Wears a wig.

SHE African-American. Mother to RACINE and ANAIA. Has burn scars over her entire body.

CHUCK HALL African-American. A lawyer. Middle-aged.

RILEY African-American. A boy of sixteen.

SCOTCH African-American. A boy of sixteen.

ANGIE African-American. Mother to RILEY and SCOTCH.

MAN African-American. A father.

NOTES
This epic takes its cues from the ancient, the modern, the tragic, the Spaghetti Western, hip-hop and Afropunk.

This text also includes adventures in typography.

A LETTER

(*A blazing inferno. Out of the fire step ANAIA and RACINE.*

A studio apartment in the Northeast.

ANAIA rubs the scars on RACINE's back with ice as the fire subsides.)

RACINE & ANAIA

Twins.

RACINE

Burnin
Them burnin twins
at home in their apartment
in the Northeast
New York or Hampshire
or Jersey

ANAIA

or
Somethin like that
Somewhere that don't feel right

RACINE and ANAIA

Twins

RACINE

Racine is the rough one who still got some pretty to her. She only got the scars on her back and a bit creeping up the rear of her neck. You can barely see 'em.

ANAIA

Anaia wasn't so lucky. Face look like it melted and then froze. Mostly people don't let their eyes meet hers.

RACINE

'Cine used the handle of a rake to shut Tommy Danson up in the seventh grade when he called 'Naia a bad name. Thas the kinda roughness she got.

ANAIA

‘Naia is trapped in a prison of sweetness. Girl so ugly don’t get to be mean

RACINE

‘Cine does though. She got both their mean.

(to ANAIA)

Got somethin today.

ANAIA

‘Naia’s too tired for this.
She work in a warehouse packing cold things into boxes all day
She’s too tired for this-

RACINE

In the mail. Got somethin. News.

ANAIA

‘Naia keep her head down out of habit.
O, yeah? I got news, too.

RACINE

This big, tho.
Got a letter with some news in it. Big news.

ANAIA

Letter from who?

RACINE

From
Mama.

ANAIA

From who?

RACINE

From Mama.

ANAIA

Who Mama?

RACINE

Our Mama.

ANAIA

We got a mama?

RACINE

We do.

ANAIA

Too tired for this
I thought she was dead.

RACINE

Well. She ain't.

ANAIA

I thought she was dead in a fire. Same fire that put these marks on us.

RACINE

Well, she ain't.

ANAIA

Well, what she want? Where she been?

RACINE

You gettin all worked up. Switch.

(*ANAIA sits. RACINE rubs ice on ANAIA's scars.*)

RACINE

She wanna see us. She been in a place. A place for sick people who old.

ANAIA

Uh old folks' home?

RACINE

I think so.

(*takes an envelope from her pocket. reads.*)

"Folsom Rest Home for the Weary."
2115 Pluckum Drive
Oscarville, MS/AL/FL/TX/TN/AR/KY
Dirty South 39582313650849"

ANAIA

Thas where she at?

RACINE

Eyup.

ANAIA

Damn. Thas where she been at?

RACINE

Seem like it.

ANAIA

Damn.

RACINE

Hey Twin.

ANAIA

Yeah?

RACINE

Seem like we got to go to where she at.

ANAIA

Go?

RACINE

Yeah.

ANAIA

But we don't know her and she don't know us.

RACINE

She know our names and she knew how to find us. We got to go see her.

ANAIA

Well, why she ain't come see us in all these years? Ask about us?

RACINE

Only one way to find out. Les go.

ANAIA

Now?

RACINE

Eyup. Right now 'cause she' finna go.

ANAIA

Where she finna go?

RACINE

Die.

ANAIA

Die?

RACINE

Eyup. Says so in the letter.

ANAIA

Damn, 'Cine.

RACINE

I know it.

ANAIA

She only wrote to you? She ain't write me?

RACINE

Ain't but my name on the envelope, but she talk about you.

ANAIA

Why she ain't write me?

RACINE

Maybe 'cause she knew you'd be all emotional.

ANAIA

Me?

RACINE

Yeah, you. Even though she ain't been around us she prolly got uh intuition about it. Mamas be knowin bout stuff like that. She can prolly sense how you be gettin all emotional, all sad-sack-y—

ANAIA

I don't be

RACINE

You do.

ANAIA

Don't.

RACINE

Do. You cried about that kitten we couldn't get outta the engine. The one that died?

ANAIA

It died 'cause you wasn't patient enough to coax it out.

RACINE

Had to get to work. You cried. 'Member? All emotional.

ANAIA

…..chyeahhhhhh I guess thas true. I do be all emotional sometimes—

RACINE

Like a lil punk.

ANAIA

Yeah, yeah, ha ha—

RACINE

Like a lil bish

ANAIA

Now you takin it too far.

RACINE

I'm playin.

ANAIA

I got stuff to do, though. I gotta meet up with Ellis and tell him about something—

RACINE

Ellis who?

O. him.

ANAIA

Yeah. We sposed to meet up.

RACINE

'Cine sigh and roll her eyes like,

"Here we go again
bout that man she met online."

(*to ANAIA*)

What you gotta meet up with him for?

ANAIA

We sposed to meet up and talk about the future.

RACINE

'Cine bite her tongue.

(*to ANAIA*)

Mhmm.
Switch.

(*They switch positions and ANAIA is now applying ice to RACINE's scars*.)

You love him?

ANAIA

No. But I don't want him to leave.

RACINE

Then do what you gotta do to keep him.

ANAIA

He don't like me to look at him when we doin it.

RACINE

So don't look at him. Put your pride away. Some of us don't get to have pride.

ANAIA

True.

RACINE

So, let him get it from behind. If you look at him you might start to catch feelins.

ANAIA

True, true.

RACINE

And we ain't got time for bein weak with feelins for no man, 'Naia.
We got things to do.
She waitin on us.

ANAIA

She finna go, huh?
Go die, huh?

RACINE

Eyup. She finna go so we gotta go.

ANAIA

damn.

RACINE

I
know.

ANAIA

W e l l
I guess I'll catch him later—

RACINE

Thas right. You can catch ol' dude later. We need to look good since this kinda like our first and last time seein her, don't you think?
I'm finna dress up. I'm wearin lipstick and all.

ANAIA

Ima put me on some too.

RACINE

I'm finna get cuuuuuuuute

ANAIA

You don't never get cute. You be on that "boho, I'm so pretty I ain't gotta try" shit.

RACINE

Yeah, but this is Mama
we talkin 'bout.

ANAIA

I feel ya.

(*They are both getting pretty-fied.*)

That lipstick real red

RACINE

Eyup.

ANAIA

Like how it feel to know she comin and goin.

ANAIA & RACINE

You look good. Thanks.
Think she'll like it?
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

BEFORE GOD

(The TWINS stand before an immense door.)

RACINE

We in it. This is it. Folsom Rest Home for the Weary.
2115 Pluckum Drive
Oscarville, MS/AL/FL/TX/TN/AR/KY
Dirty South 39582313650849
Room 416B
And a sign with our names on it. She musta did that so we'd know we was in the right place.

ANAIA

My name ain't spelt right.

RACINE

O, come on, 'Naia.

ANAIA

You think she still alive?

RACINE

Only one way to find out.

ANAIA

My mascara runnin?

RACINE

A little.

ANAIA

Iss hot.

RACINE

Yeah. Dirty South stay hot.

ANAIA

You ready?

RACINE

To see God?

ANAIA

God?

RACINE

Well, she made us, didn't she?

ANAIA

You gon' get struck down.

SHE

A naia? Racine?

(*They look at one another.)*

That y'all?

ANAIA

You go on in.

RACINE

You first.

SHE

I can f e e l y'all out there

ANAIA

First born is the first one in.

RACINE

Thas stupid.

SHE

you're wastin you're wastin
time.

(SHE is wheezing. SHE lies on her deathbed. SHE huffs, coughs and struggles to breathe. Her voice comes out in hoarse rasps.)

I'm

so glad

you

could make it.

Had the nurse

put the sign out by my door a sign with your names on it

see it?

RACINE

Yes, mama.
We. We
We really liked that sign.

RACINE cont'd

We seen it.

ANAIA

My name ain't spelt right.

SHE

Good. Lemme look at y'all.

(*They step closer*.)

Okay. I see.
Anaia and Racine.
Used to put y'all in opposite clothes so I could tell you apart.
Anaia you was always in tropical colors and Racine
I had you in pastels. No matchy-matchy for my girls.

RACINE

Thas nice. Now I like tropical and 'Naia like pastels.

ANAIA

Thas a lie.

RACINE

Shut up.
So. How you been?

SHE (*laughs*)

O, you know.
Dyin.

RACINE

Yeah, yeah. I see you got them tubes in you.
We came soon as we could. Had to take off work but we here.
I work at a daycare and 'Naia work in a warehouse. She got a boyfriend.

ANAIA

thas a lie

SHE

She got something else, too.

RACINE

Ma'am?

SHE

Nothin. She quiet.

ANAIA

hi mama.

SHE

I ain't wrote you, 'Naia
'cause you be gettin all emotional. Been that way since you was little. I know.
I ain't wanna upset you.

ANAIA

I
I know.
Thank you.

SHE

My girls.

RACINE

Yeah.

SHE

My baby girls.

RACINE

Eyup. Thas us.

SHE

Y'all are lookin at The Last Days
I keep tellin myself,
"Ruby, this might be your last Thursday
your last time wakin up in this bed
your last time thinkin iss your last time"

(*SHE laughs. TWINS join, nervously*)

Y'all done got so big.

ANAIA

Yeah. Been eighteen years.

SHE

Eyup.

ANAIA

We thought you was dead.

SHE

Thas what I wanted y'all to think.
Who want
a mama
with a body
like uh
a l l i g a t o r ?

ANAIA

Why
why you got a body like uh alligator?

SHE

'Causa what he did.

ANAIA

He who?

SHE

They ain't told y'all.

RACINE

Naw, they just said you was dead.

ANAIA

So we a little confused 'cause you alive but you ain't write us or nothin

RACINE

But we ain't really worried about all that—

ANAIA

Eighteen years. Been eighteen years.

(*An awkward pause*)

SHE

Was that
an awkward pause?

(SHE laughs. RACINE joins, nervously.)

All you know is it was a fire and your mama was gone, huh?

RACINE

Thas pretty much what we been told.

ANAIA

Yeah.

SHE

Well
i'm 'on tell you
there's more.

Had it all sealt up so you could walk without shame
but iss more and you need to know it so you understand your mama ain't just up and leave you
iss more to it than that

ANAIA

What more?

SHE

I'll tell you It was a regular day. I had took y'all to daycare and went to work. Regular day. Got off work, got y'all and came home, a baby in each arm. Y'all was three.
We get home and I put y'all in the kitchen at the table with some apple slices-a snack while I made dinner.
I had just chopped the onions at the counter
I'll never forget it
just chopped the onions when I heard the window in the bathroom shut.

(*A kind of flashback. SHE retreats into the past, hearing the window, suspicious*.)

Hello?
The T.V. Cartoons—loud

Hello?

The curtains in the kitchen—breathin. The onion on the cutting board—waitin.
I rinse my hands and wipe 'em on my dress, iss an old dress.

Hello? I pat your baby-heads, go down the hall
Maybe just a branch against the window
Hello?
Only, ain't no trees near our windows
Hello?
Down the hall. Bathroom door wide open. Dark in there.
The mirror showing my scared silhouette. Nothin in here but a bone-tired woman.

(*SHE laughs*)

My hand goes to the light switch
just to be, just to be sure, you know? Can't be too careful
He said he was gon come back, so
Just to be sure
And the green light flashes on
and issa hand on the shower curtain
O god
The fear like an ax to the middle of my chest
O no
His hand, he pull the curtain aside kinda sweet-like and

SHE cont'd

it reminds me of why I fell in love with him
he do got a tender side
he pull the curtain aside and just stands there
No smile or nothin. No frown, neither. Face as plain as a slice of wheat bread.

"Hey"

He says, like we on the street or somethin
like he ain't just break into my bathroom
like it wasn't no restraining order
I couldn't even scream or nothin

Just

"Hey. You back."

A nod.
My mouth is twitching and my guts is on fire

"The kids are in the kitchen. I was just making dinner—"

And iss like a train runs into my throat
He grips hard.
That same plain face right up next to mine, barely sweatin and even lookin at me in a tender way
I can hear what sounds like a lullaby just before everything turns dark.

(*Sound of a liquid being poured and MAN whistling*.)

When I come to I smell it. Liquor. Issa sickly sweet smell.

Soaked in it.
Good thing this dress is old
It wouldn't never come out.

And he's whistling like a little bird while he do it.
His boots step all in it. He's whistling and pouring
Not rushing, just easy. He's gonna kill me easy.
Then the boots are still. Here go. Here go.
I close my eyes

but nothin happens.
A full minute passes—all I hear is my breath and you two in the kitchen giggling like how babies giggle like they got the sun in they mouth ya know?

SHE cont'd

And the boots move tward y'all in the kitchen
And I can't talk 'cause he took the wind outta my mouth
but in my throat is a rattle like:

"D o n' t y o u f u c k i n g t o u c h m y b a b i e s!!!"

But he already bringin y'all. 'Cine, I think he was holding you. 'Naia, you was walking. One of y'all was sayin
"daddy where you been?"
And he sayin
"on the Moon"
"the mooooon?"
"Yup. With the aliens."
And by now y'all in the bathroom standing over me.
And 'Cine, you wasn't scared. You said to him
"Daddy…whasss wrong with Mommy? What she on the ground for?"
And he said, "Mommy's sleepy and she want us to wake her up. You gonna help me wake her up, Anaia?"
And 'Naia, you was always the emotional one, you could tell somethin was off and you was scared. You say,

"I I wanna I wanna go back and watch Scooby Doo."
"Just a minute. Let's wake Mommy up."
"How?"
"Like this."

(*A sound like a thousand matches being struck simultaneously*)

And 'Naia went to whining.
"daddy i don't like this."
And then he musta dropped that little bit of fire on me 'cause it was all on me gettin bigger, that quick

eatin through me 'til my brain was smart enough to turn off.

Thahwasit.

RACINE

Damn.
Mama. Damn.
We was we was w a t c h i n ?

SHE

Well
You was there.
You was there. He put you down and left.
Them scars you got is from when you tried to get the fire off me.

RACINE

I don't
rem
mem
ber.

SHE

Ask your sister if she does.

(*ANAIA is looking away, trying to hide her face*.)

RACINE

Twin?
Twin?
You cryin?

ANAIA

Umsicktomystomach.
Um sick.

(*ANAIA tries to run away*.)

RACINE

Twin? Damn. All emotional.

SHE

Where you goin?

(*ANAIA stops in her tracks*.)

Ya can't outrun it
Girl.
Iss gonna meet you wherever you go.

ANAIA

I
thought I thought
you was dancin
wigglin on the ground like that i thought it was
a dance or somethin. I see it all the time I see it I see you dancin on the ground with the fire on you like a dress

SHE

Shh. Quit cryin, Baby. No need to cry.

RACINE

She's sorry, Mama. She just…you know.

SHE

Iss somethin I need y'all to do but I don't think y'all gon be able to do it if she's steady cryin.

RACINE

We can do it. We can. We're strong. Ain't we strong, 'Naia?

ANAIA

Yeah.

RACINE

We're strong. We can do anything.

SHE

Good.
Ima keep this real simple:
Make your daddy dead
dead
dead
And everything around him you can destroy, too
I think he got some b i t c h
Kill his spirit, then the body
like he did me
Make him dead real dead
And bring me back some treasures from it.

SHE

Gotta do it quick, too. My body ready to go. We on a time crunch.

All the way **dead**.

(*A silence*.)

RACINE

Uh uh uh uh uh
uh uh uh uhhhh

RACINE & ANAIA

Uh uh uhhhh uh uh uh
uh uh uh uh uh

RACINE

Mama
we respect that you dyin and all, but uhh
this seems a little
crazy—

SHE

Not as crazy as settin a woman on fire in front of her own kids, then abandoning them to go off and start another life like nothin ever happened.

RACINE

…
Okay. You got a point. But uh uhmm
don't you think that since you dyin you might wanna just

forgive and forget? Die in a peaceful state?

SHE

Peace will come when he go.

RACINE

But Mama—

SHE

When he go

ANAIA

We ain't killers—

SHE

Anaia, pull this sheet offa me.

(*ANAIA does so. A moment during which the TWINS are aghast. Their mother's body is a hideous thing on the sheets*.)

No peace 'til I know he gone.
You gonna do this for your mother? This one thing 'fore I die?

RACINE

We'll do it.

SHE

Good, good. Good girls. Dead. Real dead.
And bring me back a piece.

ANAIA

I don't think—

RACINE

Just tell us how to find him.

SHE

I don't know where he at but The Lawyer is out in Californ-eye-ayy near the City of Angels. Chuck Hall—I'll never forget the name. Chuck. Hall. He in the Valley. He gon know where your Daddy's at. Go find him and make him tell you.
He a slippery motherfucker, so be careful.

SHE

Dead, real dead. Lotsa blood is fine.

GOING WEST

(*The Twins are traveling west throughout the following.)*

RACINE

Hey Twin.

ANAIA

Yeah.

RACINE

You ain't sick to your stomach no more?

ANAIA

No.

RACINE

Good. Well. She is our mama.

ANAIA

But she ain't never came for us, never asked for us—

RACINE

I'm sure she kept track of where we was at—

ANAIA

It ain't the same.

RACINE

How was she gon come see us lookin like that?

ANAIA

Like what?

RACINE

Like scary. You know good and well you woulda shit yourself when you was twelve if she'da come see you lookin like that talkin 'bout
"I'm your long lost Mama."

ANAIA

I guess you right.

RACINE

Iss just one thing she want us to do before she die.

ANAIA

Yeah. But we ain't killers.

RACINE

I am.

ANAIA

No, you ain't. Who you done killed?

RACINE

Don't worry 'bout all that.

ANAIA

Damn, Cine. I mean. She our mama.

RACINE

Right.

ANAIA

And she made us, so she kinda like God, like you said—

RACINE

Eyup, eyup—

ANAIA

And he ain't even like us

RACINE

Nope. So. So you ready?

ANAIA

…Eyup.

RACINE

Good. We gon do this. We gon do it right.

(*They travel in silence for a bit.*)

ANAIA

I favor her.

RACINE

Who. God?

ANAIA

Eyup. The scars I got on my face she got on her whole self.

RACINE

Yeah.

ANAIA

I'm glad I favor somebody.

RACINE

Yeah. It do look like she spit you out.
Wonder who spit me out.

ANAIA

You prolly a combo between both of 'em.

RACINE

I 'on know. Whatchoo think he look like?

ANAIA

Like a skunk or a snake. Or a giant with a smelly beard. He prolly got a beer belly.

RACINE

How we gonna kill him?

ANAIA

I don't know.

RACINE

A gun?

ANAIA

Where we gon get a gun?

RACINE

Steal one or something.

ANAIA

That ain't no good plan. We should just poison him.

RACINE

With what?

ANAIA

Strychnine. Arsenic.

RACINE

That seem old-fashioned.

ANAIA

At least he'll be dead and we ain't gotta really get no blood on us. I don't like blood.

RACINE

But God said lotsa blood is okay.

ANAIA

Still.

RACINE

Poison is a punk ass bitch ass way to kill somebody. I think we should take a hammer to him.

ANAIA

You sick.

RACINE

I could do it. Be just like bustin open an egg.

ANAIA

Nasty.

RACINE

Or stab him?

ANAIA

Eugh. The sound of his body gettin stabbed like meat. Ima be sick.

RACINE

I know! We'll push him off a building.

ANAIA

What building?

RACINE

We'll find one. We'll get him there close to the edge and push him.

ANAIA

What if he grab one of us on the way down?

RACINE

What if we knock him out
then throw him off the building?

ANAIA

How hard do you have to hit someone to knock them out? I don't like it.

RACINE

You don't like any of it.

ANAIA

I 'on know
I 'on know about this, 'Cine.
We ain't killers—

RACINE

How you figure that? We come from a man who tried to kill our mama and a mama who wants to kill that man. Iss in the blood.

ANAIA

Ima be sick. I bet he just look like an ordinary man.

I used to dream about a lady in a fire and I didn't know why.

THE WEAPON

(*The outskirts of the City of Angels. RACINE picks up a sizable rock*.)

RACINE

Take your sock off.

(*ANAIA does so. RACINE places the rock in the sock and ties a knot. Ha*.)

ANAIA

That for what I think iss for?

RACINE

Eyup. Feels right. Like Cain and Abel or something.

ANAIA

She gon get her blood, I guess.

(They walk on.)

IN THE VALLEY

(The Twins stand before the door of a law office in The Valley.)

RACINE

Just follow my lead.

(*RACINE knocks on the door. We're very suddenly inside of the office. HALL sits at a desk.*)

HALL

A Mister Chuck Wendell Hall sits at an immense desk in a North Hollywood office building. The desk was his grandfather's. Pure oak very recently refurbished. The kind of desk that makes a statement.
He sits behind the heavy desk, sweating. It is the dead of summer.
Sweating rivers and rivers.
He wears a shirt with a collar. Expensive. And a necktie, loosened. Also expensive. If one were to look below the desk, one would see that he's wearing Bermuda shorts—not terribly expensive. Orange-ish. No shoes or socks on his feet.

Dead of summer.

He belches. There is tequila warming in a glass somewhere nearby. A fat black fly perched on the edge of the glass contemplates a swim.
His hand shaking, he takes a bottle of pills from his Bermuda shorts pocket and attempts to unscrew the cap. Nothing. Child lock. Fuck.
He tries again, pressing down. The cap opens and he pours the entire contents of the bottle onto the desk:

One, two, three…
placing the pills side by side—a pill parade:

four, five, six, seven…
He reaches for the glass of tequila and the fly buzzes angrily away. Gulp. It barely burns he's been drinking for hours.

eight, nine, tennn, eleven, twelf, thirteeeen…
He talks to the pills:

I'm going to follow you all straight
home
I'm going to follow you
home, take me there
fourteen, f if t ee n, s e v e n t e e n

it is hard to count, three hours he's been drinking

e i g h t e e n
n i n e t e e n

Okay, okay. Here we go!

And he swallows one—

(*A knock at the door*)

HALL cont'd

I'm not here I'm out to lunch I'm retired go away.

(*Another knock*)

I'm gone! Another pill.

(*A loud bang. He goes to the door and opens it. THE TWINS are standing there.*)

Who
the
eff you?
are

RACINE

Are you Mr. Hall?

HALL

I'm not
here.

(*Trying to slam the door in their faces, he stumbles and falls to the ground*)

Oh. Shit.

ANAIA

He's drunk.

RACINE

Are you Hall?

HALL

Why should I tell you anything? I work for-hiccup—
my own self!

ANAIA

I think this is him.

RACINE

That's his name on the door.

ANAIA

But he's drunk as a skunk.

RACINE

What that mean?

ANAIA

We can't
if he's drunk we can't do it!

RACINE

Can't do what?

ANAIA

Rough him up or anything. It wouldn't be nice!

HALL

You're not the boss of me I'm the boss of myself!

RACINE

Shut up!

HALL

Don't you tell me to shut up! This is my place.
I built it from the ground up.
You can't just come into a person's place and tell them what to do.

RACINE

Definitely him.

HALL

Gaddamn right.

RACINE

Sit down.

HALL

I will. But not because you told me to. I'm sitting down because it's what I wanna do.

RACINE

Sure.

ANAIA

Stinks in here.

HALL

That's 'cause Luna's been shitting everywhere with no regard for anyone but herself.

RACINE

Who's Luna?

HALL

My receptionist. Just kidding. The cat. It was my receptionist's cat but she left it behind when she left me. Ha haha but your face, though. You thought it was a human I was talkin about. Can you imagine some lady squatting in the corner to drop a deuce? Ha haHa

ANAIA

You're disgusting.

HALL

I know that you think I don't know that. It's what she said all the time before she left.

(*imitating a female voice*)

> "Why don't you shave the back of your neck? You feel like a woolly mammoth. It's disgusting"

With so much hate. She said it with so much Like she couldn't stand the very ground I was walking on How'd that happen We had been in love it had been love I tell you the first time I saw her—

RACINE

Shut up!

ANAIA

Don't.

RACINE

We need to ask you some things, Mr. Hall.

HALL

Do I know you?

RACINE

Yes.

ANAIA

No.

RACINE

We might know some people in common.

HALL

Like who?

RACINE

A man from a long time ago. Tried to kill his wife. Ring a bell?

HALL

Lotta bells in the world Church bells, wedding bells We didn't get married in a church We went right on down to the courthouse and got it done She wore a yellow sundress with—

RACINE

Sir, we need you to focus.

ANAIA

Yes. Please focus.

HALL

I am focused. I'm focused. Hell, I won Most Focused once. Irving Middle School Choir—

RACINE

O, my god—

HALL

I did! Don't talk to me about focus.

ANAIA

Alright, fine. Sir, we really need to find him soon. We on a time crunch. A man who tried to kill his wife eighteen years ago. He was a client of yours. Think about it.

HALL

Thinking, thinking. Mmmmmmmmmnope. Nothing. Don't know who that is.

RACINE

You're lyin.

HALL

Imagine that.

(*RACINE raises the rock/sock.)*

HALL

What's that for?

(She holds it up higher.)

ANAIA

'Cine.

RACINE

I'm gonna have to pop your fat head if you don't quit playin.

HALL

With that?

RACINE

What else?

(*HALL is laughing really hard*)

HALL

Is that a rock in there?
You're gonna hit me to death with
a sock?

(*RACINE swings the rock. He dodges*)

ANAIA

'Cine! Don't—

HALL

Missed me!

(*RACINE swings again, again HALL dodges.)*

ANAIA

Just give him a chance to tell us—

(*RACINE swings and HALL dodges. He laughs to beat the band*.)

HALL

Okay. No. But seriously. I'm already on my way out. You almost missed me.
L o o k i t here.

(*Holds up the pill bottle and laughs some more*)

ANAIA

What's that?

HALL

Pills!
to dispatch myselffff
Soft and hard and soft
I t o o k 'em I t o o k 'em I t o o k 'em So Glory is coming! You're too late!
I am bathed in Glory—

RACINE

What's he talking about?

HALL

You see these shorts? Glory.
Got them in Bermuda.
Lotsa people have Bermuda shorts they didn't actually get in Bermuda—

ANAIA

I think he's sayin he done already took some pills to kill himself so he don't care about that rock.

HALL

That is precisely what he's saying. I've already taken a few of these. One is enough to do the magic. Two is enough to have me dance my way to hell. What do you think I'll get for a few? I dunno, is it five by now?

(*HALL swallows a few more pills. RACINE lowers the rock.*)

ANAIA

He ain't gonna tell us nothin. He ain't scared to die. Guess we gotta go.

RACINE

We ain't done with this fool. We gotta find out where—

ANAIA

C'mon, 'Cine..

RACINE

We got to!

ANAIA

Let's just look around. He's got files and things—

RACINE

It'll take forever to go through all these files! God's finna die!

(*Notices that HALL is nodding off*)

Shit. He's falling asleep—
Hey. Hey. You can't fall asleep yet.

HALL

Why not?

(*Nodding off*)

ANAIA

Please stay awake! God's finna die and we gotta find out where he at so we can go see him before She do.

HALL

The man you're looking for is your dad.

ANAIA

Sort of. He fathered us.

HALL

Tall man. Dark man. Lit a lady on fire about twenty years ago

RACINE

Yeah, that's the one!

HALL

He lied about it real g o o d
could
tell he was lying
but I honestly
wassso scared of him, I just pretended.

RACINE

What happened?

HALL

In court he said she lit herself on fire
and we presented old suicide notes she wrote when they broke up
Bastard had them in his pocket when he came to see me, before they could even arrest him.
R e a l c a l m and c o o l. Knew he would get off.

RACINE

Where he go after y'all won the court case?

HALL

Up into the hills.

ANAIA

Beverly Hills?

HALL

Castaic. Just up the 5.
Little yellow house on the highest hill.
Teal shutters.
Went there for dinner once.
Didn't want to. But.
Neat house. Dog and everything. You'd never know.

RACINE

He livin in a yellow house?

ANAIA

With a dog?

HALL

Last
I saw
him.

ANAIA

What he look like?

HALL

Like like
he ate
all
the
canaries and…

(*HALL falls asleep. ANAIA shakes him.*)

ANAIA

Mister? Mister?

(*HALL is very suddenly awake again*.)

HALL

And he must have a special kind of jizz
'cause he had more
two others boys
twinzzzz

ANAIA

Twins?
He got another set of twins?

HALL

All the c a n a r i e s.

(*And he succumbs to the pills. They stare at his body a moment*.)

RACINE

God said to bring treasure. Iss treasure here.

(*She raises the rock and hits the body. ANAIA runs away. The lights dim. Sound of rock hitting flesh and ANAIA retching*.)

UP TO THE HILLS

(*RACINE and ANAIA are climbing a steep hill*.)

RACINE

Twin?
Why you slowin down?

ANAIA

Just got a buzzin in my side.

RACINE

You wanna take a rest? We shouldn't be walking all this way, anyhow. Iss far. Maybe we can thumb a ride or somethin.

(*ANAIA sits in the dust*)

Sun's going down. We can just sleep out here. It'll be like camping.

ANAIA

'Cept we finna go kill somebody.

(*ANAIA sings softly to herself.*)

RACINE

We been killt.

ANAIA

Whatchoo mean? We breathin.

RACINE

But what we breathin if it ain't been nobody around to tell us we got mouths and lungs and that make us people like everybody else, you know?

ANAIA

Naw, I don't.

RACINE

I mean we floatin
We land from time to time and get stepped on but thas it.
Ain't been nobody around to give us some
I don't know
some foundation?
No real mama. No real daddy. Nobody.

ANAIA

You so mad.

RACINE

Ain't you? I wanna step on somethin for once. See what it feel like. Must feel good. You 'member Second Foster Daddy?

ANAIA

Mmm hmm. With his fat ass.

RACINE

'Member how he used to snap the belt at us?

ANAIA

Wasn't no "us", that was you. 'Cause you laughed every time he came down the stairs, so you always got a whuppin.

RACINE

Eyup, eyup.

ANAIA

And you used to call for Her. For God. I'd hear you callin for Her from the next room when he was hitting you—

RACINE

For Mama?

ANAIA

Eyup. You'd be cryin out for Her.

RACINE

Thas a lie.

ANAIA

No it ain't. I heard you. Ear against the wall—

RACINE

You ain't heard me cry. I never cried one time when he was hittin me. Thas why he wouldn't stop. Fat motherfucking fat bitch ass motherfucker. He the first person I killt.

ANAIA

You ain't killed him. He had a heart attack.

RACINE

He had it 'cause he kept whuppin me.
He kept whuppin me 'cause I kept doin stuff to make him whup me
'cause I knew it would kill his fat ass. Fat fuckin ass.

ANAIA

Damn.

RACINE

Yeah.

ANAIA

Twin?

RACINE

Yeah?

ANAIA

Damn.

RACINE

I know.

ANAIA

You in a room gettin whupped, God layin up with alligator skin, we got these scars and he in a yellow house with teal shutters and a dog and twins?

RACINE

Eyup.

ANAIA

New pair. Fresh pair uh twins.

RACINE

Don't I know it.
I know it. I know.

ANAIA

I like my ugly.

RACINE

You ain't ugly.

ANAIA

I am and I like it.

RACINE

Stop that.

ANAIA

For real. It keeps me safe. Ain't gotta talk to as many stupid people. They just stay outta my way. Don't nobody ever hand me no flyer on a street corner. Iss like a super power.
Damn. I'm burnin.

RACINE

Me, too. Scar be burnin like iss still some fire in there tryna come out.
You ever wanna scrape your scars off and see what's underneath?

ANAIA

Wouldn't nothin be underneath but dead.

RACINE

Might be somethin else under there.
I dunno. You might look. Different. You ever wonder?

ANAIA

No point. What we gonna do about them other twins, Twin?

RACINE

God said to destroy everything around him-

ANAIA

could. could
She said we She said we destroy everything around him.

RACINE

Well.

ANAIA

"Well" what?
They innocent. They can't help bein his kids.

RACINE

Ain't nobody innocent.
They prolly sit up at dinner and laugh about us and God.

ANAIA

No, they don't, 'Cine. Stop that.

RACINE

Sheeid.

ANAIA

They ain't done nothin to us. C'mon now.

RACINE

Fine. Fine. Fine.

(*ANAIA sings a bit to herself*.)

ANAIA

Wish it was some ice out here, Twin.

RACINE

Me, too.

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

(*A modest house in the sleepy desert city of Castaic, CA. Sound of the family dog barking. RILEY, SCOTCH and ANGIE are home*.)

RILEY

The eldest brother by two minutes, Riley, is watering the succulents on the balcony.

SCOTCH

The younger brother, Scotch, yes, after the liquor, is in his bedroom writing the best fucking poetry you've ever heard. If anyone asks, he'll say it's for school but really it's for him. Them words.

ANGIE

Their mother, Angela, is in the driveway unloading the car of a week's worth of groceries.
You boys eat like freaking cows! The least you could do is come and help me unload.

RILEY

Coming.

SCOTCH

Coming.

ANGIE

Neither is actually coming. Angie stands in the driveway, the trunk of her car open.
Two cartons of eggs, blueberries, frozen waffles—mostly for them.
Sweat on her neck she will NOT be carrying these bags in herself
It's bad enough she had to go to the store and make sure make sure make sure
she got the right brand of bacon and the correct level of milk fat
It's bad enough the clerk wouldn't accept the coupon for the peanut butter.
Expired. Expired? Expired.
It's bad enough she stepped in gum and it won't come off the bottom of her shoe no matter what she does it won't come off—come off! It won't
Come and get these bags I won't bring them in.
She won't, either. They can sit in this driveway and melt and churn and spoil
She won't do it
I'll leave them here!
She will too but not really. She'd hate for all of this stuff to go to waste and the time it took to get them and anyway, she'd end up looking crazy to the neighbors who were probably already looking, peeking up the hill at the house
The top of this hill feels like being in a fishbowl
Not a great neighborhood for being black in
Riley? Scotch?

RILEY & SCOTCH

Coming.

RILEY

Riley's all about the succulents they don't really need much water but it's an excuse
She's embarrassing, down there yelling and dowdy with all of her groceries.
So effing house-wife-y, it's embarrassing. So why not water the succulents or pretend to? Hey, Bruh. You should go help Mom.

SCOTCH

Scotch's poetry is so dope that he refuses to stop writing.
I mean, the piece uses barbeque as a metaphor for love
Barbeque as a metaphor for love—chyeah!
Brilliance I can't, Bruh. I'm writing!

RILEY

He can't effng write.

ANGIE

Her bunion hurts. She has a bunion. God.

RILEY

His metaphors are always clunky.

ANGIE

There are black birds circling above. Maybe they know about the bunion.
Dead of summer.

RILEY

Mom, Scotch is gonna come help you.

SCOTCH

Scotch recites:
"And girl, if the sauce gets too dry
on our road to love, Girl
If the sauce gets too dry
from the length of time spent
on the hot coals of life…"
This shit so dope!

ANGIE

Angie hates her life.

The man occasionally walks into a room and gives her a look like He wishes she'd disappear already. The kids won't let her touch them
And the bunion. Frig. She can't cuss. Hasn't had a good cuss since the kids.
Your father will be home soon and when He sees these groceries out here He's going to be very angry!
…

RILEY & SCOTCH & ANGIE

Who's she kidding?

ANGIE

Tired and pissed does not equal fool. She will put the groceries away.
The man is not the sort…

ANGIE cont'd

She will put the groceries away. Frig.

RILEY

Go help Mom.

SCOTCH

Shit so dope!

RILEY

Dang.

(*He looks over the railing of the balcony*.)

Her mom jeans are extra mom-ish today. Sucks teeth.
I got it, Mom. I got it.

RACINE

A few yards away hiding behind a neighbor's minivan.

ANAIA

She's pretty.

RACINE

So?

ANAIA

Just sayin she's pretty.

RACINE

Don't.

RILEY (*carrying groceries*)

You got everything, huh?

ANGIE

What took you so long to come help me?

RILEY

Sorry. Was watering the plants.

(*RILEY and ANGIE make their way inside*)

ANGIE

Has your father called?

RILEY

Nope.

ANGIE

Probably working late tonight.

SCOTCH

What's for dinner?

ANGIE

You can eat anything you helped me carry inside.

SCOTCH

Aw, man, Mom, don't be mad. I'm writing.

ANGIE

Angie refuses to be another tired, middle-aged woman. She refuses. Going out tonight.

SCOTCH

Yeah. Clayton and I were thinking of hitting up a spot—

ANGIE

No. I'm going out tonight. Me.

RILEY

You?

(*The twins look at their mother*)

SCOTCH

With Dad?

ANGIE

With Mrs. Orson.

SCOTCH

What, y'all goin to a tea party or something? Ha haha

ANGIE

That's really funny. No. It's a party. Just a regular one.

SCOTCH

You gonna make dinner before you go?

RILEY

Don't listen to him, Mom.

ANGIE

I'm not.

(*ANGIE goes upstairs.*)

RILEY

Such a spoiled brat.

SCOTCH

What? Y'all need to stop oppressing me for being so committed to my writing process. I'm trying to make us all rich.

RILEY

Yeah, yeah.

SCOTCH

What are you making for dinner?

RILEY

Probably do an arugula salad. It's coniferous. Detoxifying.

SCOTCH

Are you tryna be wack or does that happen by accident? I'm just askin.

ANGIE

Upstairs in the master bedroom, the eyeliner pencil is slippery.
It is the dead of summer and the boys don't know what she's planning.
No one knows, not even Mrs. Orson, about the suitcase packed in the trunk ready to take her to Yucca Valley where she'll hide out with a friend and then take the bus to Vegas where she'll gamble no less than three hundred of the seven grand she's been saving before taking the train up to Connecticut, where a new name and job are waiting for her.
He doesn't hit, He's never done that.
but

but

That look He gave her when she asked
about what happened with His ex-wife
That look was. Hm.
That look that look was that was a l o o k that hmmm

(*RILEY knocks on the door*)

RILEY

Mom?

ANGIE

What is it, Riley? I'm getting dressed.

RILEY

Do you want some salad for the road? Arugula?

ANGIE

Had this come from her body?
No, Son. I'm fine. I'll eat out.

RILEY

Okay.
Mom?

ANGIE

Son?

RILEY

i love you.

ANGIE

Had this come from her body? I know, Son.

(*ANGIE opens the door to the room and touches RILEY's face*.)

I love you, too.

(*ANGIE makes her way down the stairs and out the front door*.)

Tell your father I'll be back later on. Keep the door closed. We aren't cooling the neighborhood. Scotch—clean your ears. They're dripping. God. Don't you feel that?

SCOTCH

All of my feeling goes into my work.

ANGIE

Take care.

SCOTCH & RILEY

Bye, Mom.

(*As soon as she closes the door, SCOTCH turns up the radio. It is incredibly loud. RILEY puts in headphones and makes dinner. SCOTCH may thrash to his music*.

ANGIE steps outside and closes the front door. She gives the house a good, long look and then the finger. She gets into the car and drives a bit but doesn't get very far. The TWINS are sitting in middle of the road. ANAIA sings softly to herself, looking away. RACINE stares directly at ANGIE.)

IN THE ROAD

ANGIE

Hello? Hello? Excuse me?
Uh. Hi? Can you hear me? Hellllllooooooooooo!

RACINE

We just gon ask her where he at. Thas it. Thas it, 'Naia. You shakin. Stop.

ANGIE

HELLOOOOO

ANAIA

Ain't you gonna say somethin?

RACINE

She gotta come to us.

ANGIE

Girls? Can you move, please? Shoo. Shoo!

RACINE

Who this bitch think she shooin?

(*ANGIE takes the keys out of the ignition, climbs out of the car, walking toward the Twins.)*

ANGIE

Excuse me, but I've got to be somewhere and
are you two okay? Is everything alright?

RACINE

We fine.

ANGIE

She doesn't look well.

RACINE

She's fine. You know us?

ANGIE

Know you? Uh. No. Should I?

RACINE

We're his first ones.

ANGIE

Who?

ANAIA

His first kids. We're the ones he had first.

ANGIE

O. **o.**
You're alive?

RACINE

Naw, we're zombies.

ANGIE

He said
He said
you died in some kind of fire and He didn't have to pay child support.
Are you here for child support?

(*She takes off her pearl necklace, coming closer.*)

ANGIE

Real. Japanese Akoya.

RACINE

Don't nobody want your pearls.

ANGIE

Well, this what I've got to offer.

RACINE

You got more to offer.

ANGIE

I need the car.

RACINE

You ain't in no position to be tellin us what you need.
You know what our mama's been doin while you been layin up in your big yellow house with them teal shutters?

ANAIA

Our mama been up in a bed wastin away. He burnt up most of her body. She a crisp.

RACINE

Eyup. He tried to kill her.
And us, too. See? Fire bit me on my back and arms and 'Naia on her face.

ANGIE

I'm so sorry. That is unfortunate. But I hope you understand
that that He lied to me—

RACINE

You knew he was lyin.

ANAIA

'Cine—

ANGIE

I didn't.

RACINE

Yeah, you did.

ANGIE

I did not.

RACINE

'Naia, who this heffa think she foolin? Can't even lie straight.

ANAIA

I don't know, 'Cine. She could be tellin the truth—

RACINE

You was sittin up in a yellow house with teal shutters while Daddy number three was makin us wash his drawz and make him macaroni outa box and lickin his lips anytime I came in the room with my shoulders showin-

ANAIA

Let's just let her go-

RACINE

You was sittin up in a blood house, a house he got to put a mask on what he done to us. You ain't ask no questions?

(*ANGIE tries to walk back to the car but RACINE blocks her path*)

ANGIE

Please. I've got to get away.

RACINE

We couldn't get away. Ain't never worn no pearls. You, 'Naia?

ANAIA

Never even held none.

RACINE

I like that car. It's a fair reward for all we been through, I think.

ANGIE

It's mine.

RACINE

Iss ours. He never gave us nothin.
He gave you a lot. And somma what he gave you shoulda been ours.

ANGIE

I'm sorry that He—

RACINE

Gimme them keys.

ANGIE

No.

RACINE

What ? Is you stupid?

(*RACINE tries to grab the keys from ANGIE, but ANGIE resists. They struggle a bit.*)

RACINE

Gimme the keys, bitch! Give 'em to me!

ANGIE

They're mine!

(*RACINE manages to wrench the keys from ANGIE's hand. She holds them up, gleefully.*)

RACINE

Got 'em.

ANGIE

They don't belong to you!

RACINE

Thas whatchyo mouth say!
Look at her, 'Naia. She ain't used to not getting what she wants.

ANGIE

That's just
That's just mean.

RACINE

"That's just
That's just mean." Ha ha ha HA ha!

ANGIE

You...you pair of animals. You're going to come and steal from me because of something He did?

ANAIA

We ain't animals. We on a mission. From God.

ANGIE

God?

RACINE

God is our mama.

ANGIE

O, that's right. Your "mama".

RACINE

I don't like the way you sayin "Mama" like that.

ANGIE

Well, I don't like having my property stolen by a couple of thieves!

ANAIA

We ain't thieves.

ANGIE

Yes you ARE! I just wanna get away
I just wanna
I've earned it
I planned for months
IF He comes home and I tell Him the car's been stolen do you know do you know what He'll…
goddammit Angie you really thought you'd get away, didn't you you really thought you really did—

RACINE

Our mama ain't never had a shot like the one you got. Sheeid. You ain't special.

ANGIE

...It's not my fault
your weak, ghetto trashy "mama" got burned up!
She should've left Him!

ANAIA & RACINE & ANGIE

……..

ANAIA

….uh….umm

RACINE

uh huh, uh umm

ANAIA & RACINE

uh um ummm

ANAIA

….Bitch…

RACINE

…hold up hold up holdup…this Bitch,

ANAIA

"Weak"?
"Ghetto trashy"?

RACINE

Bitch, where you get all that from?

ANAIA

This bitch done called God "ghetto trashy"!

ANGIE

Each of us is responsible for how our lives turn out! If you were educated, you'd understand that—

(*RACINE hits ANGIE in the face with the sock*.)

RACINE

We educated.

ANGIE

…you hit me…

ANAIA

Twin, don't—

RACINE

We educated, Bitch! Say it. Say we educated!

ANGIE

animal

(*RACINE hits ANGIE again*)

ANAIA

Racine!

ANGIE

…ow...h a r d—

(*RACINE hits ANGIE a few times. ANAIA hides her face*.)

ANGIE

a i
r.

(*ANGIE is dead. ANAIA whimpers*.)

RACINE

Twin.

ANAIA

Yeah?

RACINE

You gonna be sick?

ANAIA

I don't think so.

RACINE

You want them pearls?

ANAIA

I 'Cine she dead?

RACINE

You ain't did nothin', so you cool. Iss all on me. If it come up, we'll just tell the truth.
You want them pearls?

ANAIA

God might.

RACINE

God don't want nothin but blood.
Let's keep one of her nails. They nice. Manicured.

TWINS & TWINS

(*Inside the house. SCOTCH and RILEY seated for a dinner of arugula, piled impossibly high*.)

SCOTCH

I hate you. You're the worst person alive.

RILEY

There's plenty of other food.

SCOTCH

Where do you think she really went?

RILEY

Don't know. Mexico?

SCOTCH

Dad's gonna find her.

RILEY

Yeah.

SCOTCH

Wanna hear a poem I wrote for her?

RILEY

No. Really, no.

SCOTCH

It's short.

RILEY

God. Please. No.

SCOTCH

It's an acrostic that doesn't announce itself:
Matriarch resistant to the matronly
Otherworldly, kind and compassionate
Thoughtful in times of woe or triumph
Holds heaven and earth in her hallowed hands
Even when nothing is enough,
Ride or die wit' it, never shy wit' it
Mother.

RILEY

I'm dead.

SCOTCH

Jealous.

(*A knock at the door*.)

RILEY

Get it. I ordered pizza.

(*SCOTCH goes to the door and opens it. ANAIA and RACINE stand before him*.)

SCOTCH

I know you?

RACINE

No.

ANAIA

Kind of.

RILEY

Who is it?

SCOTCH

Not pizza. Wait. Wait. Our birthday isn't for a couple of weeks but…

(*RILEY comes to the door*)

RILEY

I didn't actually order pizza…Who's this?

RACINE

I'm Racine.

ANAIA

Anaia.

RILEY, SCOTCH, ANAIA & RACINE

Twins.
……..

SCOTCH

O shit.
O shit
O shit!

RILEY

What?

SCOTCH

Dad did this, I think.

RACINE

He definitely did.

SCOTCH

Come on in, girls! You can change upstairs. O shit O shit!

RILEY

Wait—what are you doing?

SCOTCH

Dad hired them!

RILEY

How do we know that?

SCOTCH

Look at them, Riley! Twins! Stripper twins!

RILEY

They don't look like—

SCOTCH

I should call Michael and Tyrell—

RACINE

Don't call anyone else. Private show.

SCOTCH

Okay. Whatever you say, Cutie. Go on up. Second door on the left.

(*ANAIA and RACINE head upstairs*)

SCOTCH

Oh my god. Stripper Twins! Dad's a genius!

RILEY

This just doesn't seem like something he'd do.
Let me just call him and make sure he really sent them.

SCOTCH (*imitating RILEY*)

"Let me just call him…" Do you wake up in the morning and stroke your chin thinking of ways to be the lamest motherfucker ever? Damn.

RILEY

I just—

SCOTCH

It's our birthday.

RILEY

In two weeks.

SCOTCH

He always surprises us. Remember the turtles?

RILEY

Yes. In our beds while we slept—

SCOTCH

Twin fucking turtles we woke up to on our tenth birthday like it was muhfuckin Christmas!

RILEY

They stank.

SCOTCH

Muhfuckin Turtle Christmas!

RILEY

Kinda creepy if you ask me.

SCOTCH

Get excited with me, Bro! Twins! We're about to get a striptease from a pair of TWINS! I gotta go get fresh. I call the pretty one.
Ay ay ay! Twins!

(*SCOTCH turns up the radio.)*

DRESSING

(*ANAIA and RACINE get dressed in the sexiest clothes they can find in ANGIE's closet.*)

ANAIA

I don't like this I don't like this I don't like this

(*RACINE holds ANAIA by her shoulders*)

RACINE

We almost there, 'Naia. People always quit just when they 'bout to reach the finish line. Now's not the time to be gettin all emotional. Come on. We almost there. He'll be home soon.

ANAIA

This ain't right.

RACINE

I said we're almost t h e r e ! Don't get all weak on me, now.

ANAIA

Fine, then! Go ahead and do what you wanna do but I don't want no part of it.

(*ANAIA turns to leave*)

RACINE

You don't want no part of it?
You is part of it!

(*ANAIA continues out the door*)

You just a lil punk!

ANAIA

I ain't no punk! Just ain't all hardened like you!

RACINE

"Hardened"? The fuck that mean?

ANAIA

Means you ain't got no soul or compassion!

RACINE

I got soul and compassion for GOD! Who's finna die!

ANAIA

But you ain't got none for nobody else.

RACINE

"But you ain't got none for nobody else". No, I don't!
And why should I?
Huh? Who you see around this motherfucker I should be havin soul and compassion for, huh?

ANAIA

Okay, fine, fine, fine. Shit. But you gotta promise me it ain't no more blood but his.

RACINE

I promise.

ANAIA

You gotta swear to God.

RACINE

Fine. I swear 'fore God and to God and I put that on everything. No more blood but his.

ANAIA

If you go back on it, I'm just gon walk away, Twin. Naw, I'm not gon walk. Ima run. You on your own.

RACINE

Let's just get ready.

ANAIA

I will.
Don't see why we gotta tease them like we strippers, tho.
Seem weird. They're our brothers—

RACINE

Don't you even say that or it becomes true.
They ain't nothin to us and we ain't nothin to them. We on a mission. From God.

ANAIA

Twin?

RACINE

Yeah.

ANAIA

How you felt about killin that lady?

RACINE

I ain't felt no kinda way.
Don't look at me like that. I didn't feel nothin. She wasn't a nice lady. And she kinda stole from us. I don't feel nothin for her. All my feelings is for God.

ANAIA

Forreal?

RACINE

Eyup. God. In between them sheets with her skin flakin off. God prolly ain't been touched by a man since he did it.

ANAIA

Nope.

RACINE

And what she say? "Ghetto trashy"?

ANAIA

I believe thas what she said.

RACINE

Now errbody know talkin shit about God will get you kilt.

ANAIA

Eyup.

RACINE

Struck down.

ANAIA

Right.

RACINE

We ain't nothin' but the hand of God doin Her bidding.

ANAIA

Right. You right.

THE TEASE

(*ANAIA and RACINE come down the stairs, dressed to strip. The radio plays stripping music. RILEY is nearby, watching but not participating*.)

SCOTCH

Alright ladies! Let's see what you got!

(*The women dance. RACINE is much more free with her movement than ANAIA. RACINE gives SCOTCH a full on lap dance*.)

SCOTCH

Awww, yeahhh! Yes. Yeah, Girl. Work that ass. Work. Hell yeah!

SCOTCH cont'd

Riley! Twins, Riley! Twins! Hey you

(*points to ANAIA*)

I want you behind me. Put those titties on my neck.

(*ANAIA goes near to him, awkwardly dancing*.)

Wait, wait, wait. Get behind me. Behind. I want this one in the front.

Riley? You better get in on this, Bro. He did it for both of us.

RILEY

I'm alright.

SCOTCH

No you're not. You. Go dance with my brother.

(*He's pointing at ANAIA, who looks at RILEY.*)

RILEY

No, she doesn't need to do that. That's all you, Scotch.

SCOTCH

No, Bruh. That's all *you*. I got the pretty one. That one's yours.

(*ANAIA isn't sure where to go*. *She and RACINE look at one another. ANAIA exits the house.)*

Where's she goin? This isn't over yet. How long did he pay for? Riley?

RACINE

My sister ain't ugly.

SCOTCH

No, no. I guess, all god's children are beautiful, or whatever. Sure.

ALL FALL DOWN

(*Outside. RILEY follows ANAIA*)

RILEY

Hey. Sorry I don't. I just don't think.
It's not because of your face or anything. I'm just. This is more Scotch's thing.
You want some water or something?

ANAIA

No.

RILEY

Okay. Want a coat? Someone might drive by and. Never mind. So, how long did he pay for?

ANAIA

Who?

RILEY

My dad.

ANAIA

He didn't.

RILEY

He didn't?

ANAIA

No.

RILEY

I knew it. I knew you weren't strippers. You jut don't have the—
Something just didn't add up. So, what are you really?

ANAIA

Sick. Ima little sick to my stomach.

RILEY

O. Anything I can do for you? You want something to eat? We've got arugula.

ANAIA

Thas alright.

RILEY

You sound like you're from somewhere in the south.

ANAIA

Eyup.

RILEY

My dad is, too.

ANAIA

…He ever talk about it?

RILEY

Not a lot. When he does it's usually to say something about how fucked up everyone down there is. How they enjoy swimming in their own misery.

ANAIA

Hm.

RILEY

I've never really been to the south. Well, Texas once. Austin. Band trip.

ANAIA

How old are you?

RILEY

We'll be seventeen in thirteen days.

ANAIA

Oh. Bet you got you a girlfriend.

RILEY

No.

ANAIA

Cute little kid like you?

RILEY

There's
there's this guy I like.

ANAIA

Oh. My bad.

RILEY

I hope you don't mind my asking……What happened to your face?

ANAIA

Thas a secret.

(*A scream from within the house*)

RILEY

You hear that?

ANAIA

Yeah. Seems like they're havin a good time.

(*Another scream*)

RILEY

No No
That sounded bad.

ANAIA

They're fine. My sister, she just gets a little wild.

RILEY

Maybe I should—

ANAIA

It was a fire. Someone set a fire and it crawled onto my face and left me like this.

RILEY

O, wow. That sucks. Why would anyone do something like that?

ANAIA

Thas what I keep askin myself. How could he?

RILEY

He? You know who did it?

(*Another scream as SCOTCH runs out of the house*)

SCOTCH

R i l e y ! !

I don't

I I don't think they're
strippers —

(*SCOTCH falls to the ground, crawling. We can see a knife stuck in his back*)

RILEY

Scotch! Scotch! There's a knife in you!

SCOTCH

Is that
w h a t t h a t i
s?

(*RILEY tries to pull the knife from his brother's back*)

No
hurts
no

RILEY

O
my god O my god
what
O my god
How O my god

(*RACINE appears from inside of the house, less dressed than when we last saw her and bloody. She holds the sock. RILEY tries to stop the blood pouring out of his brother with his hands.*)

SCOTCH

I
i i i'm—

RILEY

Don't.
DON'T!

SCOTCH

ahh h ha ha l a m e…

(*SCOTCH is gone.*)

RILEY

Ha ha HA ha haHa ha
ha haha ha hahhaha
HAHA Ha hah haha

Scotch is
Scotch is
Scotch is my
twin dead!
Scotch is my twin is
Ha aha hAHAhaha haha Ha HaaaaaAAA
He's dead His blood is He's gone
My twin
Gone
This is f u nn y y y y

ha ha HAHA ha hahA Ha ha a h a ha h aaaa ha HHhhaa

Ha ha HAA HA HA HA ha hahaha ha ahhah he's bleeeeding arugula arugula on his SHIRT ha ha ha! Ha
And and and and and he HATES arugula! Ha ha ha!

RACINE

Look like he done went crazy.

ANAIA

Yeah. Yeah.

RACINE

He called you ugly. I didn't plan to do it, but he called you ugly.

ANAIA

I am, though.

RACINE

If we don't do the other one, he's gonna tell.

ANAIA

What? No.

RACINE

You don't have to watch. You can go inside.

ANAIA

You said…you said…

RACINE

He'll talk. He might even blame you even though you didn't do it—

ANAIA

We talked. Me and him.

RACINE

What that mean?

ANAIA

Means we can't.

(*RACINE goes to approach RILEY but ANAIA stands in her way*.)

RACINE

You in my way.

ANAIA

You keep doin it. You said we'd just do him and not them but—

RACINE

I'm doin what's best for us—

ANAIA

You a lie.

RACINE

Get the fuck outta my way, Twin—

(*RACINE tries to pass ANAIA, but ANAIA shoves her*.)

G i r r r l

(*ANAIA shoves her sister again*)

Punk ass.
Punk ass bitch!
Say it. Say "I'm a punk ass weak ass bitch—

ANAIA

Stop.

RACINE

If you start cryin, I swear to god—

ANAIA

Twin—

RACINE

You in my way. God gon be mad when I tell Her—

RILEY

Why are you doing this?

ANAIA

Because your daddy is our daddy and he—

RACINE

Don't talk to him!

RILEY

My dad is...?

ANAIA

Your dad did a bad thing to our mama.

RACINE

Jesus Christ.

RILEY

O. That sucks.

RACINE

Let's do him before he gets away and tells on us—

RILEY

Is He the one that burned you?

ANAIA

Yes. And I know it's not your fault. Don't worry. We're not going to hurt you.

RACINE

This shit right here

(*ANAIA sits beside RILEY*)

RILEY

Thank you.

(*RILEY grabs ANAIA's throat. RACINE hits RILEY with the sock. He collapses*)

RACINE

What I tell you? Huh? You wanna make conversation with him? You so—

(*RILEY has gotten up and tackles RACINE. He bests her and straddles her body, his fingers tight around her neck. ANAIA tries unsuccessfully to get him off of her sister.*)

RILEY

Crazy crazy bitch! You want to come to my house and kill my brother Bitch I don't care what He did Die! Die, you. Die
There you go. Just go. Die. Stupid, filthy, disgusting, dog bitch
Die die die Die die—

(*ANAIA has hit RILEY as hard as she can on the back of his head with the sock. She hits him again and again until he gurgles, twitches, and is still. ANAIA goes to RACINE, shaking her*.)

ANAIA

O-'Cine-he's gone-I-I did it-he's—
…
Twin? Twin? 'Cine, get up.

(*Sound of a car approaching. She looks in the direction it's coming—up the driveway. She shakes RACINE again*.)

ANAIA

Get up. Somebody's comin.

(*The car stops. ANAIA lifts her sister, dragging her out of view. She waits. A car door opens and closes and MAN gets out. We hear hard-soled shoes on the ground. He stops near RILEY's body for a moment. He continues, stopping at SCOTCH's body. He walks near the bushes, very close to where ANAIA is hiding, then turns again towards the car.*

In the driveway he takes off his shoes and socks, slowly, methodically. He removes his suit jacket and tie. He rolls up his pants legs, whistling. Finally, he takes off his hat and we see his face for the first time.)

MAN

This slope continues right on up just behind the house. Pretty easy climb if you're in decent shape.
Meet me at the top.

Or. You could just stay in those bushes
and wonder.

(*MAN climbs the aforementioned hill. ANAIA emerges from the bushes, laying her sister down on the ground carefully*.)

ANAIA

Twin. He's here. I'm gonna…
I got the sock. I got it.

(*She follows MAN up the hill.)*

SHOWDOWN

(*ANAIA and MAN stand on opposite sides of the hill.*)

MAN

You still kinda pretty. Kinda. You ain't a complete monster. I was worried.

ANAIA

Huhwhat?

MAN

Well, maybe just plain "pretty" in general is a stretch. You're prettier than I left her, that's for sure. Well. You want to ask me some questions, I imagine.

ANAIA

Huhwhat?

MAN

How about if I ask one and then you ask one. You first.

ANAIA

I I
I don't know—

MAN

Yes, you do.

ANAIA

I
Why did you set her on fire?

MAN

Because she wouldn't let me hold her.

ANAIA

You set—wait, what does that—

MAN

My turn. Who'd you kill first?

ANAIA

I didn't kill nobody. Not really, 'cept in self defense. 'Cine was the one—

MAN

Who first?

ANAIA

Your wife.

MAN

Angie?

ANAIA

Thas her name? Yeah.

MAN

Wow.

ANAIA

My turn. What does that mean "she wouldn't let me hold her"? Huh? You were mad 'cause she didn't want you to touch her so you set her on fire?

MAN

It's more nuanced than that, but yes.

ANAIA

That don't strike you as a bit of an overreaction?

MAN

My turn. How'd she die?

ANAIA

Your wife? Rock in a sock. You don't think you overreacted a lil bit?

MAN

It was an appropriate response by a man out of control, I admit. I was young.

ANAIA

"Appropriate"? "Appropriate"? You are really sick.

MAN

You ever have a blemish you want to get rid of very, very badly?
A blackhead, maybe? You ever squeeze the blackhead until it falls off but there's pus underneath still hanging around? Reminding you of the ugliness of that blackhead? Then it becomes about getting rid of the puss with peroxide or whatever you can find that'll sting just a little so you know it's working? You ever just need to put a thing out because it has been so catastrophic to your very being?

ANAIA

Pus?

MAN

I was young.

ANAIA

Just something for you to get rid of?

MAN

I was young. And I'm sorry. Next thing I did was go down to the bridge over the river and hang over it, ready to jump in so I could join you all in death.

ANAIA

But you didn't.

MAN

No. And thankfully, you all survived.

ANAIA

But you went to court and got off and God is in a bed burnt to a crisp and I'm so ugly no one'll look me in my e y e s.

MAN

I'm sorry about that. But it isn't just my fault. You've got to factor in every piece of the puzzle.

ANAIA

Every p i e c e of the
p u z z l e ?
What other pieces are there?

MAN

She could've let me hold her. She could've opened herself up to me. She could've let me fully stand up in my house. I needed that as a young man. Just to fully stand.
I don't expect you to understand.

ANAIA

Igotababycomin.
You're the granddad.
A baby.

MAN

You're not a killer.

ANAIA

What am I gonna tell the baby 'bout all of this?

MAN

Put that thing down. You can tell it you made a few mistakes when you were young. Like I did.

ANAIA

How am I gonna tell it 'bout God and 'Cine and you?

ANAIA cont'd

'Bout how you tried to

k i l l us all.

MAN

"Kill us all"?
I didn't try to kill you all. Just her. You think I set my own babies on fire?
She did that. She screamed and grabbed ahold of you two.
I couldn't get her to let go. That's when I ran out.
That's why I stood on that bridge and nearly let myself fall in.
You think I tried to kill my own babies? Is that what she told you?

ANAIA

...

MAN

I didn't. She lied.

ANAIA

I promised God I'd bring back a piece of you

MAN

I'm telling you, she lied. You've got to give this up.
Otherwise it's just going to be bad for all time
You'll try to kill me and I'll have no choice but to kill you
and in doing so I'll be killing my first grandchild. I don't want to do that.

ANAIA

O my god where am
I?

MAN

Anaia.
You came out so pretty. Be a pretty mother to your baby.
Come on. Put it down and I'll walk you down that hill and you'll go tell her whatever you need to tell her
and when that baby comes you'll bring it back
and I'll bounce it on my knee

MAN cont'd

and we'll never talk about all the blood on the ground.
We'll brush it away like a cobweb.
Come on. I've got to bury my dead. We're the only ones left.

(*ANAIA lowers the sock. He goes to her and takes her hand gently*.)

How far along are you?

ANAIA

Eleven weeks.

(*He slaps her. Hard. She cradles her face, collapsing to the ground*.)

MAN

That older one, the smart one, he was gonna be somebody.
Dog bitch.
If you weren't pregnant I'd cut your eyes out and make you
eat
them.

(*He kicks her and she tumbles down the hill*.)

Go back to that h
e **c**
a **o r p**
v **s**
i **e** and tell it
n tell it
g t e l l it

I'd do it a l l again if i could

(*ANAIA struggles to stand. MAN places the bodies of his sons near to one another. He takes a flask from his coat pocket and pours it on them.*

ANAIA has gotten to her feet. MAN eyeballs her.)

ANAIA

While you was here whistling and making new babies and trying to forget all the bad things you did, Fourth Foster Mama was laughin at my scars with her friends.

MAN

I warned you.

ANAIA

Either you or me or somebody got to go today. World can't hold us both.

MAN

Suit yourself.

(*He moves toward her but RACINE jumps on his back.)*

ANAIA

'Cine!

MAN

Get off me!

(MAN is swinging around, trying to get RACINE off.)

RACINE

K i l l him, 'Naia!

(ANAIA hits MAN in the belly with the rock as hard as she can. He keels over. The Twins descend on his fallen frame, kicking and stomping him. RACINE takes the rock from her sister and brings it down on him repeatedly.)

RACINE

You
ain't
n o t h i n,
now

ANAIA

Yeah
Yeah
N o t h i n

RACINE

J
u n d
s o u
t r
a s o f t g
s p o t on the
Y o u
can't hit n o b o d y can't H I T no body no more
can't set nobody on f i r e can't marry some p r i ssy biiiitch
can't go have no new b a b i e s can't hurt God you n o t h in

ANAIA & RACINE

can't do n o b o d y like that you ain't N O T H I N y o u the one thas wrong
crawl you down there grind crawl N O T H I N monster ugly belly giant snake
you the one ain't 'bout shit N O T H I N you the one that got left you you
what you gonna do now ain't N O T H I N got no mama, no daddy no
place to put your feet up N O T H I N you gon stay downyou

(RACINE takes the liquor and pours it all over MAN's battered face. She takes his matches from the ground and strikes one.)

MAN

W a i t w a i t w a i t

RACINE

He
u l
g y,
ain't he, Twin?

ANAIA

Eyup.

(RACINE drops the match, setting MAN ablaze. He burns, writhes and screams.)

Let's go.

(The pair turn to leave, but MAN grabs RACINE's foot. The flame quickly travels up her leg.)

RACINE

Get off me,
mother
fucker!
Get off!
Let go!

ANAIA

'Cine?

(*RACINE cannot shake him off, though she fights hard. He pulls her closer. The flame engulfs her. She falls to the ground.)*

RACINE

'Naia help get him off me 'Naia!

(ANAIA takes a few steps back.)

'N a i a

(ANAIA takes a few more steps back.)

ANAIA

i
i can't, Twin

RACINE

G e t b u r n i n G e t T w i n b u r n i n
h i m T w i n h i m i s ss i s ss s
b u r n in iss iss is b u r n i nn iss s ss ssss b urnin iss ss sss
ssss s ss s s s s s ssss s s s s s s s s ss s s s s s s s ssssss s s s s s s s

ANAIA

t ' n a C

RACINE

Twin? T w i n? T
w n?
t w i n
w n?
t

(ANAIA runs and hides as her sister screams. The fire burns until everything is ash.)

TWIN?

(ANAIA makes her way from her hiding place.)

ANAIA

Them b u r n i n
Them b u r n i n twi—
Anaia is too tired for this too tired she's too tired she's too tired for this
for this Twin
For this she's too tired
'Naia lookin out like somebody could see her without f l i n c h i n g
she l o o k i n o u t

(*ANAIA looks out at us.*)

ANAIA

She lower her head out of habit

(*She leaves.*)

AGAIN BEFORE GOD

(*ANAIA stands before her mother, whose breath is coming in loose gasps. She is dwindling.*)

SHE

Well?

ANAIA

He's gone.

SHE

And your sister?

ANAIA

Her too.

(*ANAIA places the pieces of each of those killed before SHE—an ear, a manicured nail, MAN's hat, etc.*)

SHE

One, two, three, four, five.
Well, well. You did it.
I ain't tryna be funny, but I didn't think you'd be the one.

ANAIA

Yeah.

SHE

Reason you got burnt up worst is you was the one tryin hardest to save me.
Guess that shoulda tol me something 'bout how dedicated you are.

ANAIA

Yeah

SHE

You alright, Baby?

ANAIA

'Cine
'Cine died
and
and
you ain't even you ain't e'en

she dead, Mama. Dead.

He said….he told me you was the one…

SHE

What's that?

ANAIA

I got a baby comin. Ima name it Enica Thas almost Racine spelled backwards. Whatchoo think?

SHE

Clever.

(*ANAIA raises the sock/rock above her mother's head. SHE cannot see it.*)

ANAIA

Mama
Mama we cursed? Feel like it.

SHE

Hard to say.

ANAIA

Mama
You feel like you can die in peace, now?

SHE

Eyup. Iss real q u i e t now.

ANAIA

Funny
I still hear noise.

(*The almost imperceptible sound of a lullaby.*
ANAIA lowers the rock/sock.
End.)